

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMCONGEN HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5112

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIHQI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 HONG KONG 6302

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJ: GENERAL EA POLICY GUIDANCE FROM ASSISTANT

SECRETARY HOLBROOKE

REF: STATE 066980

1. OUR APPROACH TO ADVANCING AND EXPLAINING THE POLICIES OUT-LINED REFTEL CHARACTERISTICALLY HAS HAD TO BE CONDUCTED WITH TWO DISINCT AUDIENCES IN MIND: A) THE LARGE NON-COMMUNIST CHINESE POPULATION OF HONG KONG WHICH HAS ACCESS TO UNFETTERED NEWS MEDIA WITH GOOD COVERAGE OF AMERICAN STATE-MENTS AND ACTION IN EA AND THEREFORE DOES NOT REQUIRE MUCH SPECIAL ATTENTION BEYOND STANDARD USIS OPERATIONS, AND B) A SMALL GROUP OF PRC CADRE AND ACTIVE SYMPATHIZERS WHICH OF COURSE ALSO HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY THE CONTENTS OF A FREE PRESS WHILE LIVING IN HONG KONG BUT WHOSE OFFICIAL DUTIES REQUIRE THEM TO SEEK ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND AND INTERPRETATION DIRECTLY FROM AMERICANS. THE LATTER GROUP OF "AMERICAN WATCHERS" IS THE TARGET FOR THE

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CONGEN'S EFFORT.

2. FORTUNATELY FOR THIS EFFORT, PRC REPS IN HONG KONG HAVE PROGRESSIVELY BECOME MORE OUTGOING IN THEIR CONTACTS WITH CONGEN OFFICERS IN RECENT MONTHS, INCLUDING A GREATER WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE IN SUBSTANTIVE CONMIR-SATIONS, INDEED QUITE OFTEN TO INITIATE THEM. THIS

CHANGE IN ATTITUDE -- WHICH SEEMS TO APPEAR AT ALL LEVELS -- NOT ONLY STEMS FROM A GREATER SENSE OF SECURITY ON THE PART OF THESE OFFICIALS FOLLOWING THE FALL OF THE "GANG OF FOUR" BUT ALSO FROM INSTRUCTIONS FROM PEKING TO INCREASE THEIR INFORMATION-GATHERING ACTIVITIES ABOUT THE POLICIES OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. THIS HAS RESULTED IN A SOMEWHAT GREATER GIVE AND TAKE BETWEEN PRC REPRESENTATIVES AND CONGEN OFFICERS WHICH HAS OFFERED OPPORTUNITIES NOT ONLY FOR THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PRC BUT ALSO FOR THE ELABORATION OF US POLICIES ON SEVERAL MAJOR ISSUES WHICH COULD POSSIBLY FAVORABLY AFFECT THE CHINESE ASSESSMENT OF THESE POLICIES. SINCE WE ARE ACUTELY CONSCIOUS THAT PRC ELEMENTS IN HONG KONG WATCH US WATCH THEM AND WISH TO AVOID MISINTERPRETATION, WE HAVE NOT RAISED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ISSUES BUT HAVE RESPONDED TO CHINESE QUESTIONS AND INITIATIVES.

3. HUMAN RIGHTS. PRC REPRESENTATIVE HAVE SHOWN CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN PRESIDENT CARTER'S POLICIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS. MILDLY PLEASED THAT MOST WORLD PUBLICITY CENTERED ON OUR CRITICISM OF THE SITUATION IN THE SOVIET UNION, THE CHINESE INITIALLY TRIED TO READ AN EXPANDED ANTI-SOVIET ROLE INTO OUR HUMAN RIGHTS STANCE. THEIR REASONING SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN THAT SINCE THE US SHOULD KNOW THAT THE SOVIETS CARE NOTHING ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS NOR CRITICISM ON THOSE GROUNDS THERE MUST BE SOME MOTIVE OTHER THAN TRYING TO CHANGE SOVIET INTERNAL POLICIES FOR US TO PRESS SUCH ISSUES AT THIS TIME.
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AS THE UNIVERSAL APPLICABILITY OF OUR ATTITUDE ON HUMAN RIGHTS DAWNED ON THEM, THEY HINTED AT SOME DISILLUSIONMENT THAT WE WERE NOT JUST TOUGHENING UP ON THE SOVIET UNION AND HAVE SAID THEY ARE PUZZLED AS TO WHAT WE ARE ABOUT IN WHAT THE CHINESE PROFESS TO SEE AS THE "REAL WORLD".

4. WE AND THE CHINESE OBVIOUSLY LOOK AT HUMAN RIGHTS IN DIFFERENT IF NOT ANTITHETICAL WAYS, AND IT WOULD BE SILLY TO TRY TO CONVERT THEM, BUT IN EXPLAINING WHAT WE ARE DOING THEY HAVE COME NEARER TO UNDERSTANDING US WHEN WE HAVE PUT OUR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES IN A WIDE POLITICAL CONTEXT WITH LONG RANGE IMPLICATIONS. AS COMMUNISTS THEY ARE NOT RETICENT ABOUT PRESSING THEIR OWN VIEWS AND DO NOT FLINCH FROM IDEOLOGICAL COMPETITION, CONSEQUENTLY THEY HAVE SHOWN WHAT SEEMS TO BE GENUINE INTEREST WHEN IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THEM WE HAVE SAID THAT OUR CURRENT EMPHASIS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IS A FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY WHICH WE BELIEVE

HAS APPEAL TO ALL PEOPLES. ADHERENCE TO BASIC PRINCIPLES AND HUMAN RIGHTS WILL STRENGTHEN OUR FRIENDS AND DENIAL OF THEM WILL WEAKEN OUR ENEMIES. SINCE THE CHINESE ARE NOT OUR FRIENDS IN AN IDEOLOGICAL SENSE AND WOULD NOT WANT TO BE, THEY SEEM TO REALIZE THAT THIS IS NOT JUST A CASUAL COLD WAR PLOY AND DESPITE THEIR WELL DEVELOPED SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS ON SUCH THINGS THEY MAY EVEN BE WONDERING IF THE PRC ITSELF MIGHT NOT BE VULNERABLE IN THIS KIND OF COMPETITION.

5. SOUTHERN AFRICA. THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH WE ARE QUESTIONED ABOUT US ATTITUDES TOWARDS SOUTHERN AFRICA (RANKING IN ATTENTION RIGHT AFTER US/PRC RELATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS) SUGGESTS THAT THE PRC CADRES IN HONG KONG HAVE BEEN ASKED TO ELICIT WHATEVER INFORMATION THEY CAN BEYOND OFFICIAL POLICY PRONOUNCEMENTS. GENERALLY THE DISCUSSION BEGINS WITH A SKEPTICALLY PHRASED QUERY AS CONFIDENTIAL

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TO WHAT THE US IS GOING TO DO ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION'S INROADS IN THE AREA. ANSWERS POINTING TO PROBLEMS OR TO LONG-RANGE PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS ARE BRUSHED ASIDE WITH REITERATIONS OF THE DANGERS OF THE SOVIET

AND CUBAN PRESENCE. THE CHINESE OBVIOUSLY SEEM TO WANT US TO ADOPT A MORE MILITANT ANTI-SOVIET POSTURE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA BUT ARE NOT SO SURE ABOUT OUR SIMULTANEOUSLY PLAYING AN ANTI-COLONIAL ROLE, ONE WHICH THEY WOULD LIKE TO RESERVE FOR THEMSELVES. WE MIGHT BE BETTER ABLE TO DISCUSS THIS WITH THE CHINESE IF WE HAD A REALISTIC AND FACTUAL ASSESSMENT OF THE EXTENT OF SOVIET AND CUBAN INFLUENCE IN THE REGION. WHETHER OR NOT THE CHINESE WOULD AGREE WITH US OR NOT, SUCH AN ANALYSIS COULD PERHAPS ADD SOME SUBSTANCE TO OUR TALKS ON THIS SUBJECT.

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FM AMCONGEN HONG KONG
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AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 HONG KONG 6302

6. US-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS. PRC REPS IN HONG KONG ALSO
WATCH DEVELOPMETNS IN US-SRV RELATIONS CLOSELY, EX-
PRESSING GENERAL APPROVAL OF ADVANCES TOWARDS NORMAL-
IZATION BUT WRYLY INDICATING CONCERN THAT THIS WOULD
COME ABOUT BEFORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC
RELATIONS WITH PEKING. WE FACE A MODEST PROBLEM WITH
THE PRC IN THIS CONNECTION SINCE THE AMERICAN CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE
HERE HAS PUBLICLY AND VIGOROUSLY BEEN URGING
NORMALIZATION WITH THE SRV. ALTHOUGH WE BELIEVE
THAT THE PRC SEES THE US AS A USEFUL COUNTERWEIGHT TO
THE SOVIETS IN INDO-CHINA, THEIR OWN RELATIONS WITH
VIET-NAM ARE NOT PARTICULARLY WARM, AND ALWAYS BEING FACE
CONSCIOUS THE PRC WOULD PROBABLY PREFER A LITTLE LESS
UNOFFICIAL AMERICAN ENTHUSIASM IN HONG KONG. IN OTHER
MESSAGES DEALING WITH US-PRC BILATERAL RELATIONS, WE
HAVE MENTIONED THAT THERE IS AN UNDERLYING SENSE
OF GRIEVANCE ON THE CHINESE SIDE ABOUT THE SLOW PACE
OF NORMALIZATION. AN EARLIER ESTABLISHMENT OF
DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE SRV ACCOMPANIED BY MUCH
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FANFARE COULD ADD TO THAT AND SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO
ACCOUNT IN PLANNING PUBLIC STATEMENTS.

7. COMMENT: THE FOREGOING REPRESENTS THOSE TOPICS
IN WHICH THE LOCAL PRC REPRESENTATIVES HAVE EXPRESSED
GREATEST INTEREST IN RECENT MONTHS. THEIR FOCUS WILL
SHIFT AS THEY RECEIVE NEW INSTRUCTIONS FOR COLLECTION
PRIORITIES AND WE WILL REPORT SUCH CHANGES IN
INTERESTS OR LINE. TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THESE
CONTACTS, HERE, WE NEED TO BE WELL-INFORMED ON ISSUES OF
INTEREST TO THE CHINESE AND APPRECIATE THE DEPARTMENT'S
SUPPORT IN SENDING US TIMELY BACKGROUND INFORMATION.
EVEN MORE USEFUL, HOWEVER, WOULD BE MATERIAL TAILORED
FOR USE WITH THE PRC. WHEN THE DEPARTMENT HAS A

PARTICULAR POINT TO GET ACROSS TO THE CHINESE, THE
SOPHISTICATED PRC COLLECTION NETWORK IN HONG KONG IS A
TARGET WE SHOULD NOT OVERLOOK. CROSS

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